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*Superintendent of Central Inspection
Hurl Schroeder*

Who can replace CAC/Heat-Pump Disconnects

The following question has been asked regarding the replacement of required electrical disconnects for CAC/Heat-pump units. *"When a licensed City of Wichita mechanical contractor replaces a CAC condensing unit or heat pump, can his company also replace the electrical disconnect to the equipment if it needs to be replaced?"* The City of Wichita Electrical Code specifically states in part--"It shall be unlawful for any person to engage in the trade or otherwise perform the act of installing electrical wiring for equipment, apparatus or devices for light, heat, or power purposes within or on any building or premises within the City of Wichita without first having secured a master electricians certificate as above provided for or a journeyman electricians certificate as herein provided and both be in the employ of a licensed electrical contractor".

Therefore the answer is No. This part of the installation must be performed by a licensed electrical contractor of the City of Wichita. It would be their responsibility to not only install the new disconnect properly, but also check the entire branch circuit wiring to the equipment for code compliance. This would include the proper wire size and material, selection of the correct overcurrent protective devices, and proper installation techniques. They would be required to obtain an electrical permit and request an inspection when the installation was complete.

Also recently, the electrical section of OCI has discovered non dead-front CAC/Heat-pump unit disconnects being field installed in violation of the City of Wichita Electrical Code (Title 19). This has occurred mostly in residential applications and generally involves a particular disconnect. The disconnect is a single-phase, 240 VAC non-fused type disconnect rated at 60 amperes and is UL listed as an "enclosed pullout switch", but is not listed as "dead-front" and is being installed between 12 to 24 inches above finished grade. Section 19.12.120 of the City of Wichita Electrical Code states--"All switches located outside of a building shall be placed not less than six (6) feet above the finish grade unless they are of the dead-front type. *Exception: Commercial and industrial installations with switches one-hundred (100) amperes and larger, may be padlocked in lieu of dead-front type.*"

The disconnects in question are not installed six feet above finished grade and are therefore in violation. Please be advised that the disconnect must be listed and labeled as "dead-front type" by UL, ETL, etc., in order to be installed as such.

Wayne L. Bolen, Construction Inspection Supervisor, Electrical / Elevator.

Plumbing & Mechanical

Inspection Requests: When scheduling an inspection and *requesting* it for A.M. or P.M. be sure and call the inspector between 8:00 & 8:30 the morning of the inspection to verify the *request* can be accommodated. Requesting A.M. or P. M. inspections is only a *preference* and not a mandate that the inspector make the inspection at that time. (Unless pre-arranged with that inspector). *This is for any inspection requested, whether it is Plumbing, Mechanical, Building or Electrical.*

Contractor Responsibility: There is some confusion as to the responsibility of the contractor when changing out a furnace or heating unit and gas piping is involved. Please note that the 1997 Uniform Plumbing Code, Chapter 12, Section 1204.3.1 as amended requires that all gas piping be pressure tested at "ten (10) pounds". The only exception to this is "when approved by the Administrative Authority" this procedure may be waived. This would mean that the inspector on the job site would make that call. If a pressure test is not administered, then a soap test is required and it must be done to the satisfaction of the inspector.

Lawn Irrigation: When servicing or commencing work on any lawn irrigation system that is supplied by potable water, served by the City of Wichita Water Department, there is no such thing as "Grandfathering". All of these systems **MUST** be brought into compliance. This is a Life Safety Issue!

Yard Hydrants: Your standard bury hydrants cannot be tied into potable water served by the City of Wichita Water Department unless a permit is issued through the Office of Central Inspection (OCI) and a proper BACKFLOW DEVICE is installed, inspected and approved by OCI. When we see these installations anywhere in the city, we will notify Mr. Bill Vines with the cross connection backflow section of the City of Wichita Water Department. He will then send out a Letter of Violation. There will be a limited time to correct the violation or the service to the property will be discontinued until all violations have been corrected and verified.

Testable Backflow Preventers: All testable backflow preventers must be tested at the time of installation by a qualified tester/installer. This information must be sent to Mr. Bill Vines of the City of Wichita Water Department. After initial installation and inspection they must be re-tested every year and replaced or re-built every five (5) years.

Dan Leidy, Construction Inspection Supervisor, Plumbing / Mechanical

Questions & Answers

Question: The home owner wants a higher ceiling in the basement. How many sill plates can I add to the top of the basement wall?

Answer: The "Basement Standards for One and Two Family Dwellings" states that only one (1) additional 2x6 sill plate may be added. Section 1806.6 of the 1997 Uniform Building Code also requires that wood plates be bolted to the basement wall. The addition of an extra sill plate would require longer anchor bolts that penetrate through both sill plates and allow for the washer and nut. If this does not give the desired height, see Section 2320.11.5 for cripple wall requirements.

Questions & Answers cont.

Question: Braced Wall Panels -- Can I use staples as fasteners in place of nails?

Answer: No. Table-23-11-B-1-Nail Schedule of the 1997 Uniform Building Code states that Structural wood panels and particle board ½ inch and less in thickness shall be nailed. Staples are not offered as an alternate.

Question: I want to build a two-story house with a walk out or view out basement. Can the rear basement wall be framed with 2x4's?

Answer: No. The framed portion of a view out or walk out is required by the building code to be framed with 2x6's when supporting two floors and a roof.

Ray Sledge, Construction Inspection Supervisor, Building Section

Question: When measuring the floor area of a building, is the measurement taken from the outside of the exterior walls or from the inside?

Answer: Section 207 of the 1997 Uniform Building Code (UBC) defines Floor Area as the area included within the surrounding exterior walls or portion thereof, exclusive of vent shafts and courts. Therefore, the measurement would be taken from the **inside face of the exterior walls**.

The floor area of a building, or portion thereof, not provided with surrounding exterior walls shall be the usable area under the horizontal projection of the roof or floor above.

Question: If the second floor of an apartment projects over or past the exterior walls of the garage below, is fire-resistive protection required under the projecting members? The building is required to be of Type V-N construction only.

Answer: Section 302.4, Exception 2, of the 1997 Uniform Building Code requires a one hour occupancy separation between a Group R, Division 1 and a Group S, Division 3 Occupancy which is used for parking of passenger vehicles and has an area not exceeding 3,000 square feet.

Elements of the horizontal portion of this separation (floor) which are outside of the Group S, Division 3 Occupancy need not comply, except that structural members which support the fire-resistive occupancy separation must be protected by equivalent fire-resistive construction even though the structural elements extend beyond the physical boundaries of the Group S, Division 3 Occupancy.

(See Section 302.2, second paragraph.)

Jim Cranford, C.B.O., Building Codes Administrator

PLAN REVIEW

The overall turnaround time on project reviews would tend to decrease over time, if sufficient details were provided on drawings. An internal survey was conducted with the plan review staff in an effort to determine which items were being consistently missed on architectural plans submitted for review.

Those items that are consistently missed are as follows:

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|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. Information Sheet | 8. Toilet Room Finishes |
| 2. Impervious Area Calculation | 9. Safety Glazing |
| 3. Site Drainage Plans | 10. Fire/Smoke Dampers |
| 4. Screening | 11. Exit/Emergency Lights |
| 5. Landscape Plans | 12. Fire Hydrants |
| 6. Fire Stops and Draft Stops | 13. ADA Maneuvering Clearances |
| 7. Fire Resistive Assemblies with Design Numbers | |

Richard Chamberlin, Plans Examiner



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WICHITA

www.wichitagov.org



OFFICE OF CENTRAL INSPECTION
CITY HALL - SEVENTH FLOOR
455 NORTH MAIN STREET
WICHITA, KANSAS 67202



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